**Identifying Strongholds Handout**

**Some basic Truths on which we stand:**

1. Romans 6:15-23. Freedom vs slavery

2. Galatians 5:1. *Eleutheria* = freedom

3. 2 Peter 2:18-20. A person is enslaved by whatever overcomes him

4. John 8:36. *He whom the Son sets free is free indeed*.

**I. Where does the term “strongholds” come from? Keep in mind that our teaching will be focused on tearing down strongholds in the life of a person who is born again.**

**A.** 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

1. verse 4: *ochuroma*

2. 2 Peter 2:4, 9: *phulake*

3. stronghold = a walled fortress or castle or tower where guards are posted either to keep inside whoever has been locked inside or to protect whoever is inside from danger that might attack from outside

**B**. A stronghold can be good or bad depending upon who builds it and what his purpose was in building it.

1. When God builds a stronghold it is for our protection and security.

a. Psalm 91:2

b. Psalm 144:2

c. Psalm 61:3

d. 2 Samuel 22:2, 33

2. When Satan builds a stronghold it is for the purpose of imprisoning us or putting us in bondage.

3. The strongholds that Paul is talking about exist in the mind, in the thoughts

* + 1. Thought (v.5) is identified as a “*lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God,”* He says that these wayward, rebellious thoughts must be “taken captive” = to be carried away captive to be subdued, to be brought into subjection
    2. Romans 7:22-23.

**II. In order to understand how to tear down strongholds in your life (or how to avoid getting one in the first place!) it is necessary to know a little bit about how God made you.**

**A. Body, soul and spirit. I Thessalonians 5:23.**

1. Body = your natural, physical self; the part of you that you can see and touch. Your body is not born again. God’s provision for its final and eternal salvation is resurrection.

2. Soul = emotions, intellect, will, experiences and memories (history), personality; the part of your natural self that you cannot touch. Your soul is not born again. God’s provision for its salvation is a process that the Bible calls sanctification. It is the way God cleanses our thoughts and selfish desires through revelation of Himself and His love and acceptance of us (the “*washing of water with the word”* mentioned in ***Ephesians 5:26-27***). This process begins when we are born again and will be completed when we see Jesus face to face. **I John 3:2.**

3. Spirit = the part of us that is born again, that is in direct contact with God, that is already perfect and completely cleansed of sin and of the desire to sin.

4. When we read and study the Bible, it is sometimes easy to get confused by all the different words it uses for body, soul and spirit. The word “flesh” sometimes means the body and at other times it means the whole of our unredeemed nature, body and soul. The word “soul” usually means what we have already described but sometimes it also includes the flesh or the unrighteous desires that are produced by our bodies. And there are a few times when the word “soul” is used to refer to our spirit which is already born-again. (There is even a rather major disagreement among conservative Bible scholars as whether we are tripartite beings [ having 3 parts: body, soul and spirit] or bipartite beings [having 2 parts: body and soul/spirit which are the same.])

a. It is important not to take verses of scripture out of their context. It is usually obvious what a verse means when you read the whole passage.

b. It is important to understand that there are not clear divisions between the three parts we have defined. ***Hebrews 4:12*** makes this clear for us.

**B.** When Satan builds a stronghold, he builds it in the soul or the body. We will be mainly focused on strongholds built in a person’s soul. Satan cannot touch the spirit of a born-again person because his spirit is filled with the Holy Spirit and in communion with God all the time.

1. Satan begins either in the mind or in the emotions. He may plant doubt, discontent or some temptation in the mind. He sows seeds of some little irritation or resentment in the emotions. **Genesis 3:6, James 1:14-15.**  When we persist in this pattern, we give ground in our souls over to the enemy and he comes in a build his fortress on it. This fortress is what we will call a **sin-based stronghold.**

2. Another way that Satan establishes a stronghold is by planting a lie in our minds or in our emotions (or both). He will take advantage of anything he can to gain a foothold in our lives, and traumatic events often provide an open door to his advances. When something happens to us that causes intense negative emotions he will try to implant a lie in the trauma of the event. This lie, until it is exposed to God’s truth, will control our behavior and our interpretations of other events that happen later in our lives. I call this kind of stronghold and its effects on a person’s life a **lie-based stronghold**. This kind of stronghold can have a dramatic effect on behavior, both emotional and physical. It is not subject to logic or reason and cannot be removed through argument or persuasion. The way for a lie-based stronghold to be torn down is through the supernatural intervention of Jesus as He Himself speaks truth into the place where the lie has gained a foothold. We will discuss lie-based strongholds in much more detail at another meeting.

3. A third way that Satan establishes a stronghold is through the oppression of a demon. I want to lay some foundations before we get too much into demonic strongholds. In fact, we will be spending whole sessions (or sometimes 2 sessions) on each of the three kinds of strongholds that the Bible talks about: **Sin-based, lie-based, and demonic**.

**C.** Going back to a scripture we read earlier, I ***Thessalonians 5:23*****We see that God is interested in ALL the parts of us (body, soul and spirit) being whole and healthy**.

**1.** Hebrew (what the writers of the Bible were) versus Greek (what our philosophical origins are) mind-sets:

Hebrews: wholistic ----- Greeks: dualistic

2. God wants us to have healthy emotions. Emotions were created by God. They have been tainted by sin, but they were not inherently bad when God created them. We do not have to suppress or deny out emotions in order to serve God.

a. When a Hebrew person talked about knowing God he was talking about a full experience that included emotion as well as intellectual understanding and spiritual apprehension. In fact, what he was talking about was a relationship with God, a friendship with God in which there was mutual sharing on all levels.

b. We need to learn to look for and expect God to bring us into healing and release on an emotional level as well as a mental level and a spiritual level. We want God to heal and set free our emotions as well as our bodies.

3. Because our culture has given us a Greek mind-set rather than a Hebrew one, we tend to suppress our emotions, especially the unpleasant ones, instead of giving them to God. This can lead to the development of strongholds in our souls.

a. The example of anger: ***Ephesians 4: 26-27***

b. The example of stealing: ***Ephesians 4: 28***